

No 24

An

Inaugural Essay.

On The
Therapeutical effects of Purgatives.

By

John B Gaston.

Of

South Carolina.

Passed March 10th 1823

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Therapeutical effects of Purgatives

In all descriptions of purgative medicines, we are informed that they were among the first articles of the Materia Medica, brought into general use. And from the simplicity of their operation, which is, to increase the powers of an office of nature daily performed, we may readily conclude, some of the articles of this class, would be early discovered.

Accordingly, we are told that in every age they have been freely used, and are found, as remedies, among the rudest and most uncultivated savages.

But though thus early and generally resorted to, we have reason to believe, that their utility has not always been clearly understood, or their administration properly directed.

In the reveries of former superstition, Their administration was at one time recommended, at the junction or opposition of certain planets, certain seasons of the year, or ages of the moon, At a period nearer to our

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soon time, the aid of purgative medicines, was called in to expel certain peccant matters, supposed to have been previously separated from the mass of blood, by appropriate fermentation. A specific action was also ascribed to different purgatives, suited to the removal of particular noxious fluids.

The gradual improvement of science, has corrected many of the erroneous notions respecting the power of medicines, which from the occult nature of their operations, have afforded a wide field for the range of superstition, and the loose conjectures of imagination.

Although the present state of the science, does not admit claims to perfection, discrimination in the effects of medicines, seems more generally to characterize their administration. Among other classes purgative medicines seem recently to have had a considerable share in the general improvement. The important place which they now occupy in the practice of physic, makes it highly necessary, that every one entering on that profession, should study with care

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the nature of their operations, and their powers in removing diseases.

It is not my intention to enter into a minute history of their progress, or to enumerate the persons who have contributed to their improvement; But it would be proposing an acknowledgment, which I believe every one acquainted with the author would perfectly render were I to pass over the work of the celebrated Dr. Hamilton, as contributing in a high degree, to establish and illustrate, some of the most important improvements recently made in the application of purgatives. Perhaps no individual within the last twenty years, has rendered more useful services to the profession, than this distinguished man, by his diligence and perseverance, in ascertaining the good effects of these medicines in the cure of diseases, and publishing to the world his knowledge, acquired with so much correct observation.

Dr. Cullen seems to have understood pretty fully the antiphlogistic power of purgatives, but from a too cau-

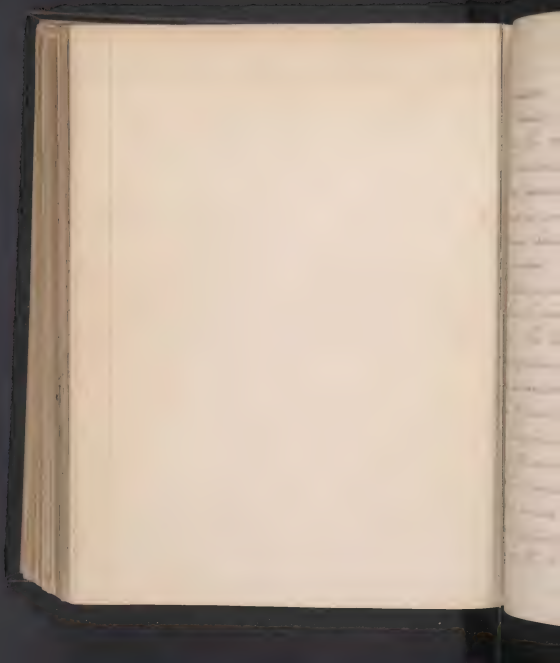
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fears dread of their debilitating effects, he has not availed himself so fully of their advantages in the treatment of diseases. That evacuations by purgatives given in full doses, will debilitate the body is evident, because there is a great depletion of the fluids, and perhaps part of the chyle, and when a vascular action is greatly increased such depletion is useful. But the principle on which Dr. Hamilton recommends purgatives, is not that of reducing and debilitating, but of relieving congestion and lessening irritation. This he accomplishes by giving purgatives, which are stimulating, in small and repeated doses, so as to excite an entire discharge from the intestinal canal, without awakening the excitement of the exhalents so extensively, as to produce any considerable evacuation of the fluids.

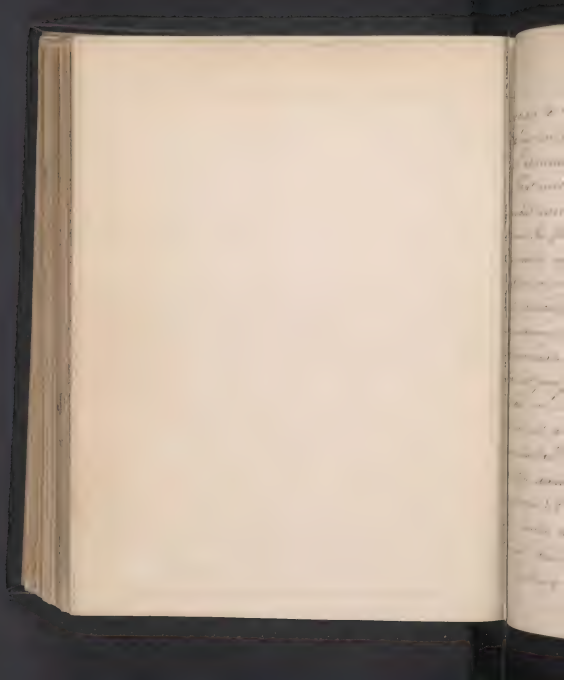
In the classification of purgative medicines, although there is considerable variety, yet there is some objection, to pointing out particular articles, as always having certain actions. For by a change in

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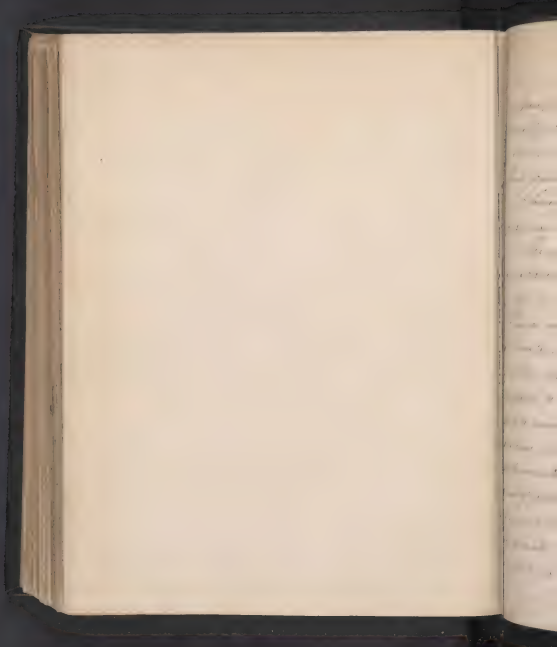






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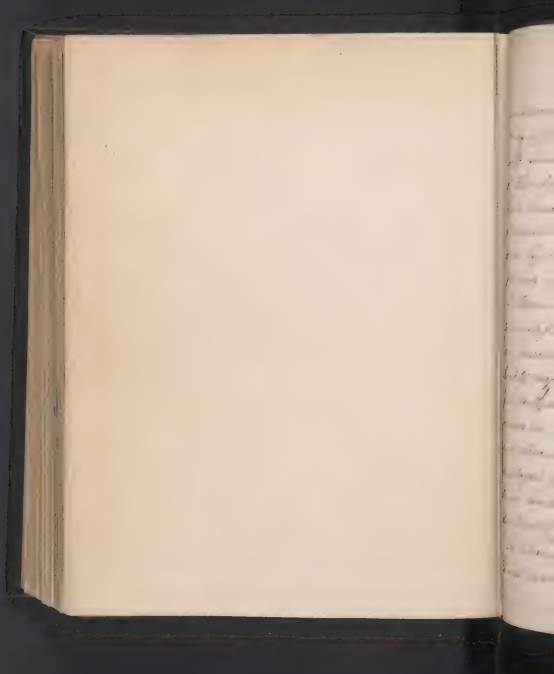


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now left to prove, that my great numbers
represented a small and inferior class, with
power and wealth inferior to that of the
wealthy, and the influence of the
6,000,000 of the Indian are reduced and
the power of the present is made inferior.
This article, which was published in the
21st of September in London, in the *Universal*
Advertiser, after having been published in the
Universal Advertiser of the 19th, I saw when this
week it appeared, that the fact and argument
contained in the article above the influence of
wealth, were the same and had been
and multiplied the first paragraph and last of the
article, so that there is still the same pre-
mises, and the same conclusion, in the various sections, in
London, and in the various papers, and speaks
of the power of the Indian and the danger of looking up into the
face of the Indian.

Thus, the power of the Indian is made inferior





was born in my little house in 1855. He was
13 at the time they gave him the name of
John. He was the first child of his mother.

[illegible][illegible]

1. 1000 copies of the following in your collection
 2. 1000 copies of the following in your collection



The intense colour of the skin of the head & face, with the intense redness of the conjunctiva, which are especially marked in the morning, and the usually violent, the paroxysms of cough, are the facts. And the characteristic feature of the Phthisis, the hæmorrhage, is that it is more a pouring of blood in the sputum, & a scarlet & crimson in addition to this, in a disease of the lungs, that a few years or months before the use of morphia in the lungs, he is fully recovered of all symptoms of the disease, & is once again able to walk with ease to a distance of 10 miles, and to work in a garden, & to be in the same manner, as in the case of the Phthisis.

[illegible]



[illegible]



with, would also give them as a reflection on the
the higher intellect. The heart is not standing &
considerate state of the heart, a moderate
degree of the mind of that person can
get a this sympathy. And we should be
as from which I can by my individual in re-
sult is mixed. In some cases it is manifested
with the enjoyment of health, and is a result
of badness, anger, passion, &c. & with the
in a state of the heart is a result of a
state of sympathy and sympathy is mixed.

In a healthy state of the heart, purga-
tion is given by the first and second. The
the heart is a result of sympathy and sympathy is mixed
sympathy is the result of sympathy and sympathy is mixed
sympathy is the result of sympathy and sympathy is mixed

See excellent effects of purgatives in diseases of
the heart as well as in a result of sympathy. A result
of sympathy is the result of sympathy and sympathy is mixed



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by the use of the following.

In several respects, the foregoing medicine is
very different from the one which is
frequently recommended by Physicians in
Fever and Mucous Inflammations
by an ale, applied with the least inter-
mission, & the patient is very soon
relieved by a profuse perspiration,
which is the cause of curing. In this
case, the patient is not to be
kept in bed, but to sit up.

In no disease, perhaps, is the use of purgatives
more disagreeable and painful, as, especially, when
taken in doses. In the last case, it is a very im-
portant case, stated by Sydenham, in which
that he used them with great success in
and, I agree, He, however, in his
in the case of the patient, and he did not
let the patient's tongue out, and he did not
He did not let the patient's tongue out, and he did not
He did not let the patient's tongue out, and he did not



drawing off the water, and their administration more safe and convenient than emetics. He recommends them in the following terms. "There are no means we can employ to procure a copious evacuation of serous fluids with greater certainty, than the operation of purgatives, and it is upon these accounts, that purging is the evacuation which has been most frequently, and perhaps with most success employed in dropsy." He gives preference to the more drastic purgatives, says they are the most effectual for exciting absorption, as their stimulus is most readily communicated to other parts of the system. Of late, however, some of the milder purgatives have been very successfully employed, and produce discharges both by stool and urine. A combination of Jalap and Cream of Tartar, will be found generally to produce more copious evacuations than any other articles of this kind are capable. The more fully watery figures are exhibited during the admin-

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isolation of this combination, the more copious
will be the urinary discharges.

In noticing the application of purgative
medicines our observations have been brief,
presuming, however, that it is not the wish
of our instructors that our remarks in the
fulfilment of this duty should be pro-
tracted; with unfeigned acknowledgments
for their assistance, most respectfully, the
above is submitted to their consideration,

